

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 16.6.2016 of Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

“I am constrained to again bring to your notice one more instance of apprehension of innocent Indian fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy. It is reported that 3 fishermen in a mechanized fishing boat from Kottaipattinam fishing base in Pudukottai District have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy in the late hours of 15.6.2016 and taken to Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan authorities adamantly refuse to recognize the traditional and historic rights of our Tamil Nadu fishermen to eke out their livelihood from fishing in the traditional waters of the Palk Bay. At the root of the problem are the ill-advised Indo-Sri Lankan agreements of 1974 and 1976 which unconstitutionally ceded Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka. I have, in my personal capacity, challenged the legal validity of the Indo- Sri Lankan agreements of 1974 and 1976 before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India with the Government of Tamil Nadu subsequently impleading itself, and the case is still pending.

It is also painful to note that the Sri Lankan Government is now adopting a strategy of detaining boats for long periods of time. The prolonged detention and idling of fishing craft without care makes them unworthy for further sailing, thus causing immense loss and misery to the fishermen.

I again request the Government of India to initiate immediate efforts to find a permanent and pragmatic workable solution to this livelihood issue of our fishermen. I request your personal intervention in the matter and request you to direct the Ministry of External Affairs to secure the immediate release of the 24 fishermen and 93 fishing boats, including the 3 fishermen and their one mechanised fishing boat apprehended on 15.6.2016 at the earliest.”

Issued by: Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9
Dated : 17.6.2016